

U.S. Patent Application No. 10/689,756
Amendment dated April 10, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 26, 2007

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and continued examination of the above-identified application are respectfully requested.

By way of this amendment, claims 1-12 are pending. New claims 7-12 have been added, and claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the present application, including the figures as originally filed. Accordingly, no questions of new matter should arise and entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) – White et al. in view of Arnarson et al.

At page 2, item 2, of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over White et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,972,494) in view of Arnarson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,184,733). The Examiner asserts that White et al. discloses an image processing apparatus including a trigger receiving section to receive a trigger from the outside, and an image processing section for processing image pickup data picked up by the camera. The Examiner further asserts that White et al. discloses a statistical processing section to process image processing result data. The Examiner admits that White et al. does not disclose a trigger generation section for generating a predetermined number of internal triggers at predetermined intervals when the trigger receiving section receives the trigger from the outside. The Examiner, however, cites Arnarson et al. to show the generation of a predetermined number of internal triggers to supply the admittedly lacking features of White et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

White et al. fails to disclose an external trigger as in the claimed invention. The Examiner identifies the rejection station part detector (Fig. 1, element 147) as an external trigger. The

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rejection station part detector (147) is described, for example, at col. 8, line 63 to col. 9, line 5 of White et al. The detector (147) identified by the Examiner is apparently only an optical counter used to sense a rejected part as it arrives at a rejection station (146), downstream of camera (12). The detector (147) therefore, among other things, fails to trigger any internal timers, or even image pickup of a workpiece.

Thus, White et al. does not suggest the image processing system and method as claimed. White et al. only shows an optical counter (147) used to detect the passage of a failed part, but fails to disclose any triggering action as recited. The signal delivered by the detector (147) over line (148) to the controller (computer 140) is not used to initiate image pickup processing. Rather, the detector (147) only records a part count rather than an image, and only after the workpiece (package 18) has been imaged by the camera.

Arnarson et al., even if combined with White et al., does not disclose the generation of predetermined numbers of internal triggers at predetermined intervals. Arnarson et al. describes an object detection system for use in a food conveyor, in which a line scan camera (Fig. 1, element 1) takes an image of the food item at regular intervals as the item passes under the camera on conveyor belt (6). Arnarson et al. apparently describes a continuous or untriggered system in which scanning is continuously and repetitively performed, rather than on a triggered basis. Arnarson et al. fails to describe the taking of a set number of images using camera (1), but instead simply continuously scans the transported food items. Arnarson et al. therefore fails to describe the generation of multiple internal triggers as the Examiner asserts, and would not produce the claimed invention unit even if combined with White et al. Further, the Office Action has not identified sufficient motivation to combine Arnarson et al., which lacks a trigger, with White et al., which only detects a count.

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For these reasons, the rejection should be withdrawn.

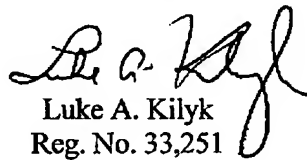
The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned regarding the present application should there be any remaining issues with respect to the patentability of the present application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0925. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such extension is requested and should also be charged to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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